COMMUNITY

Krishnan violin trio presents 'hauntingly beautiful music'

By SESHADRI KUMAR

As the sound of music continued to linger in the background, struggling to find an apt expression to describe the music that reverberated at the Stafford Civic Center 10 days ago, I decided upon the expression 'hauntingly beautiful music.'

Haunting, not in the Halloween sense, but as in pleasantly captivating and mesmerizing.

An 88 year-old violin master and the legendary violinist from India, Prof. T. N. Krishnan, with his daughter and son, Viji Krishnan-Natarajan and Sriram Krishnan, showered a rain of music, even as the trio handled the bow and strings in seemingly effortless moves, producing some profound pieces.

The evening of incomparable music by the violin trio was sponsored by the Classical Arts Society of Houston on June 12 and the event was free.

Classical Arts Society is a nonprofit organization, sponsoring leading and emerging artists from India and elsewhere.

Music has no language and the instrumental music has no words accompanying it.

That made the concert uniquely appealing to the novice as well as a connoisseur of music.

Being a novice in classical Carnatic music, I sought the comments of Thara Narasimhan, competent in critical appreciation of music.

In her words:

For nearly three hours the exhilarating music by the violin trio led by Prof. T. N. Krishnan with his daughter Viji and son Sriram accompanied by T. S. Nandakumar on the mridangam and Chandrasekara Sharma on ghatam.

"Meenakshi Memudham" in Purvikalyani and the Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Shanmugapriya were the highlights.

The concert included popular songs Raghuvamsa Sudha in Kathanakuthoohalam, and Manasa Sancharare in Raga Saama to name a couple. He has been a concert musician for over eight decades presenting along with almost all the stalwarts of Carnatic music.

His authentic presentation combined with the classicism and aesthetics. His personality traits being a legendary artist included a deep sense of humility and sincerity with which Dr. Krishnan performed. It was indeed a great inspiration to many aspiring young musicians and music lovers who attended the event."

As mentioned in the program brochure, Krishnan is the most senior, living exponent of the pristine tradition and his performance exuded clarity, fidelity and finesse. He has imbibed the essence of musical giants and performs with vigor, mixed with poignancy and without compromising the depth of the tradition.

Viji Krishnan represents the seventh generation in a family of distinguished musicians who have contributed enormously to Indian music. She began her training at the age of three and gave her first performance at seven, earning the praise "a chip of the old block," from The Hindu. As an international performing artist, a New York Times critic called Viji " a Paganini of the East."

Chandrasekara Sharma, left, Sriram Krishnan, T.N. Krishnan, Viji Krishnan-Natarajan and T.S. Nadakumar at the Stafford Civic center on June 12.

Sriram Krishnan, following in his sister's footsteps, began learning to play violin at the age of five from his grandfather. He has been giving public performances since the age of nine.

The violin concert achieved its crescendo with the able accompaniments of T. S. Nandakumar on the mridangam and Chandrasekara Sharma on the ghatam.

Nandakumar is a top grade artists of the All India Radio. He has accompanied artists like Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, M. D. Ramanathan and Balamuralikrishna, to name a few.

Sharma is one of the most sought after ghatam artists. He is the nephew of ghatam maestro Vinayakram. He has accompanied nearly 50 leading artists and is an A grade artists at the All India Radio.